

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Director of Evening Department The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

LESSON FOR JANUARY 5.

THE CREATION.

LESSON TEXT—Genesis 1:15, 7, 9, 10, 12, 16, 21, 25, 27, 31.
GOLDEN TEXT—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Gen. 1:1.

In our scheme of lessons we return to the Old Testament and confine our study for the ensuing year to the first six books of the Bible.

The word Genesis means "beginnings," and in the book of that name we see recorded all the information of the beginning of things that our heavenly father deemed necessary in the development of the scheme of redemption. The beginning of the earth, the firmament, of man, of the family, of sin, and the first steps of our recorded revelation of God, the bible. Genesis is quoted sixty times in seventeen books of the New Testament, and its character as an inspired divine revelation is authenticated by history and the testimony of Christ.

After all the assaults of its enemies, and of the skeptics, the first verse of the book of Genesis contains all the clear, concise, and positive knowledge man possesses about the origin of this Universe. "God created," not, "God is all and all is God." Pantheism has no ground upon which to stand. "In the beginning God created," therefore he is above and was before the heaven and the earth. Moses left us no record of the "how" and that field has ever been one of interesting speculation. Between the fourth and the fifth words of this verse is ample room for all and every theory though we still remain in ignorance of any absolute knowledge, both of time and process. Let us not forget to emphasize the thought, "In the beginning God" in the beginning of childhood, the beginning of education, of business, of home life, etc. The beginning of all right thinking and true living, of every proper relation of life, is God and yet we are withholding that knowledge from young America upon the specious plea that the bible is sectarian.

Truth of the Trinity.

Following this statement of the creation come the steps of rehabilitation, for the words in verse two denote waste, void, or confusion and one Hebrew scholar contends for the word "ruin." See also Isa. 45:18 R. V. Thus it seems that upon this created earth there must have come a judgment, presumably upon some pre-Adamite race and that what follows, verse two, is not the original creation but the steps whereby this earth was made ready as a habitation for man.

Lord Kelvin said, "scientific thought is compelled to accept the idea of creative power." There is a wonderful agreement between modern science and the account in Genesis: (1) The biblical accounts by their wording provide for both creation and the evolutionary development of created things; (2) Science has failed to produce matter, life, or the soul of man; and of these in each instance the bible says God created while of all else it says he made.

The great truth of the trinity is revealed in these first three verses (1) God, v. 1; (2) Spirit, v. 2; and (3) "God said"—the word, see John 1:1.

Verse five does not call the light a day meaning twelve hours, but rather a period of time, just as we speak of an Arctic "day," which is six months. One of the mysteries of today is that

water which is 700 times heavier than air is held in the sky in the form of clouds. What holds the storm, the snow, the lightning, the gorgeous colors, etc.? The answer is found in verse 7, "and God made the firmament and divided the waters, and called the firmament heaven." There is nothing more firm than the laws which hold this body of water in the sky for he (God) set those laws into motion. "And God said," (v. 9). Theories of geology and the statement of Genesis agree perfectly as to the preparation of this earth for the appearance of vegetable life. The vegetable derives directly from the air and water and soil those elements necessary to maintain life.

Animal life cannot assimilate these elements unless they are already fixed in organic vegetable life. How and where life originated no science has discovered. Pasteur's dictum that, "it is nothing but life which generates life," still stands unshaken. And so the constant and only satisfactory answer to the questions, how, where and why, of all these things of this material universe is God. God created, God made, he created, and then set into being those forces and laws whereby the earth, the sky, the sun and the moon have gone on with unbroken regularity. He made possible those processes whereby man develops, the oak grows, and animal and vegetable life reproduce each after its own kind for "like begets like." Infinite order, infinite provision, "And God saw that everything he made was very good." None can suggest a better world than this if all would obey his laws, if sin had not entered.

The Crowning Glory.

But creation was not yet complete. Man, the last created, was the crowning glory of this earthly creation. Verses 26-30 will be studied in connection with next week's lesson and are referred to here simply to give a complete account of creation. It would be well, however, to refer to the fact that the great God and creator made provision for the immortal souls of mankind by arranging for his training in the knowledge and character of himself, the father, by the institution of the Sabbath, as soon as he had prepared a place in which man was to dwell.

The dignity and majesty of the language of Genesis is sublime.

Astrologers tell us that our sun and solar system is only one of perhaps a million others. A recent writer tells us that a ray of light which would travel the equivalent of nine times around the earth in one second would take nine years to travel across the great nebula in the constellation of Orion. And "God made" all of this. "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God," and it is the man next door to the fool who tries to stipulate what God ought or ought not to do.

What a beautiful story this is to tell to children. A mother drew her three-year-old son's attention to the beauty of field and mountain and added "God loves the beautiful and loves little boys too." Neither spoke for a moment. Then the son asked his mother if she were praying. "Yes," said the mother. "Then I want to say prayers too," said the boy. It is a tremendous responsibility to give to others their first idea of God. May God keep us all on this the first Sunday of the New Year to learn the meaning of the first four words of our lesson.

The Triumph.

God wants a man to work out his own life with fear and trembling. We make mistakes and sin, but God loves us because we are men capable of making his thoughts triumph in this world.—Rev. N. McPherson, Congregationalist, Springfield, Mass.

The Battle.

The heart of man is the battlefield; the combatants are the good and the evil inclinations. Duty and desire stand opposed to each other.—Rabbi S. Hecht, Hebrew, Los Angeles.

WASHINGTON GOSSIP

Visitor of Importance Spends a Day in the House



WASHINGTON.—It didn't make a bit of difference to Benjamin Oswald Johnson, aged six, what was going on around his little head the other afternoon. He was busy with his own devices? This young Ben Johnson stumbled around the floor of the House of Representatives, while the real Ben Johnson, from Kentucky, and other legislators and statesmen thundered and argued over the legislative, executive and judicial appropriation bill.

Little Ben is one of the five children of Representative Joseph Johnson of South Carolina. He kept the House of Representatives amused from noon until 4:39 o'clock p. m. when the gavel fell for adjournment.

Ben appeared on the house floor at noon dressed in a dark blue sailor suit. His father had troubles of his own, for he is in charge of the legislative bill, and Representative Fowler, with his loudest voice, was out after the scalps of several of the items in that bill. While Representative Fowler was being replied to by Representative Johnson, Little Ben was playing tag around his father's legs, going in and out between them in most marvelous fashion.

Young Ben interviewed pretty nearly every member of the house. He didn't wait for an introduction, but clambered right into the laps of the country's law makers. From the Democratic side he would hop to the Republican end of the chamber and pull out the watches of his father's dearest political foes, "just to hear the wheels tick." Uncle Joe Cannon contributed to Ben's war chest to the extent of a silver coin, and at the end of the day Ben's fists were bulging with nickels, dimes and quarters, which had been pressed upon him by admiring friends.

Strange Sounds Come from Smithsonian Building

IF you are passing across the front of the Smithsonian Institution at midnight and hear strange cries coming from the Byzantine, Norman or rounded Gothic towers, buttresses, battlements, groined arches and cornices, keep your nerve. The moon may be floating through the southern sky. Now it will be hidden under dense cloud masses, and then it will burst through the black mist and cast its silver sheen over the heavens and the earth. Against all this, the long red sandstone buildings, dark but for a watchman's lamp in the central vestibule, will be submitted. It looks gloomy and lonesome.

You can reassure yourself that you are not in the depths of a haunted forest and before some dismal medieval castle by looking northward to catch the glitter of the lights in the post office tower.

The sounds that have stopped you, and it may be, chilled you, come from—not mortals—but from bats. There are many of these aberrant insectivores or flying mammals, family



gallopithecidae, order of chiroptera, in the shadowy nooks of the Smithsonian building.

Satisfied that no harm is near, you fall to thinking of James Smithson's bequest of 1826; of James Renwick, the designer of this building, the first of its style not ecclesiastic, to be reared in the United States; your glance goes up to the top of the tallest tower 145 feet above the asphalt, all strewn with dead leaves, and your mind goes back to the time when President Polk and his cabinet and hundreds of proud men, now dust, attended the cornerstone laying in 1847.

Cigarette Smoking Under Ban of Censorship



CIGARETTE smoking by women has come under the ban of censorship by society women in Washington, who are leading a crusade against smoking and drinking in the social set at the capital.

Mrs. William H. Haywood, who put herself on record several years ago, when she served only grape juice at the debutante ball of her daughter, Miss Doris Haywood, is one of the leaders in the anti-cigarette movement, and is said to not permit women to smoke in her house.

Mrs. Levi Z. Leiter, who many think is to be the social leader in place of the late Mrs. John R. McLean, has also declared her willing-

ness to aid the crusaders against feminine cigarette smoking.

Mrs. John B. Henderson, who is the arbiter of dancing and dancers in Washington, has always been opposed to the practice. It is said she requested a fair smoker to go outside.

Lady Alan Johnston, daughter of Mrs. James Pinchot, is one of the defenders of the weed, and smokes when and wherever it strikes her fancy.

Lady Johnston struck the first note in the battle some time ago, when she offered her cigarette case to other guests at a luncheon. The hostess was a crusader, and is said to have requested Lady Johnston, who happened to be the guest of honor, not to smoke.

Mrs. Franklin MacVeagh, who has recently completed her million-dollar palace on Sixteenth street, has provided little balconies from her ballroom windows for the men to smoke between dances. If the lady guests wish to smoke they have to go outside also.